



TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES AND CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES

Response to the Independent Ombudsman First Quarter Report, FY 2017 January 19, 2017

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department has received the FY 17 First Quarter Report from the Office of the Independent Ombudsman (OIO). TJJD appreciates the opportunity to respond.

The OIO reported in the First Quarter Report a special investigation at the Gainesville State School, regarding allegations that a staff member was involved in sexual contact with a TJJD youth but remained in contact with some TJJD youth while being investigated. As noted by the OIO, previous agency policy was vague in terms of decision points and action for staff with allegations of sexual contact, which remain under investigation. The Executive Director moved immediately to correct that situation with the issuance of Administrative Directive #2 FY17 issued on September 28, 2016. The directive clearly notes the agency's zero-tolerance stance on sexual abuse, sexual activity and sexual harassment. It further defines expectations regarding reassignment and suspension of staff under investigation for these allegations.

The agency has further created a tracking system within the State Programs and Facilities Division to track staff on suspension or reassignment due to allegations of sexual abuse or serious allegations of use of force resulting in injury to a youth. This list is cross-referenced weekly with reports received in the Incident Reporting Center (IRC) by the Inspector General staff (OIG) and with the status of investigations in the Administrative Investigation Division. By doing so, we ensure that the three divisions are in constant communication about the status of investigations, which staff are suspended and reassigned as well as ensuring that staff cleared of wrongdoing are immediately returned to work. The agency made changes to Human Resource practices to ensure that all background checks are conducted through Central office.

The staff in question in the Gainesville incident remains in the Cooke County Jail and has been indicted by a local grand jury. The agency continues to closely watch the county handling of the criminal case.

As always, TJJD appreciates the opportunity to respond to the OIO and looks forward to sharing updates on these efforts that continue to move the agency effectively forward.